

## Chapter 2: Degree Planning

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### Introduction

It is not easy to complete a degree while serving on active duty in the military. The key to successfully completing a degree while on active duty is to maximize the non-traditional credit options and supplement them with traditional classes. Members should take advantage of every opportunity to gain academic credit for:

- \* military learning experiences
  - \* college level testing
  - \* independent study courses
  - \* traditional college classes
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### Automated Degree Planning (Auto DP)

More than 1500 degree plans from 47 regionally accredited institutions are available through the CG Institute. A list of institutions and degree plans is available in AutoDP can be found at [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cqi/downloads/degree\\_matrix.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cqi/downloads/degree_matrix.pdf). These institutions are all members of SOCCOAST (see Chapter 4 for more information) and most offer distance-learning options for course delivery.

Through this system, students are provided a personalized degree plan as a roadmap to follow to complete the degree. The plan details the institution's requirements and shows how military credit recommendations and other prior learning experiences apply to the degree. Any prior college credit and credit by examination is also included.

1. Before applying for a degree plan, students shall ensure that their military education record is up-to-date. See Chapter 1 for information on viewing and updating the military education record. The Application for Voluntary Education Services should be used to request this service.
  2. To request a personalized degree plan, students will submit [form CGI 1561 "Application for Voluntary Education Services"](#), see Figure 1-1-1.
  3. All Coast Guard members cannot request additional degree plans for a period of 90 calendar days from date of email notification that their Education Credit Review package was completed to provide equitable access to the education specialists who provide degree planning services.
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## Degree Planning, (continued)

### Types of Degrees

Degree Type	Description	Min. SH Required *	Gen Ed Required	Area of Study	Free Electives
<b>AAST – Associate in Applied Science &amp; Technology</b>	Two year degree typically awarded by community and junior colleges. Most military credits will apply to the Area of Study and Free Electives. Requires less general education credits than any other type of degree. If transferring into a bachelor's degree, additional coursework in general education areas will be required.	<b>60</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>AAS – Associate in Applied Science</b>	Two year degree typically awarded by community and junior colleges. Most military credits will apply to the Area of Study and Free Electives. Requires less general education credits than most types of degree. If transferring into a bachelor's degree, additional coursework in general education areas will be required.	<b>60</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>AS – Associate of Science</b>	Two year degree typically awarded by community and junior colleges. Most military credits will apply to the free electives area.	<b>60</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>AA - Associate of Arts</b>	Two year degree typically awarded by community and junior colleges. Most military credit falls into the free elective category.	<b>60</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>BS – Bachelor of Science</b>	Four year degree awarded by colleges and universities. Balanced between liberal arts and science. Most BS degrees provide for an area of concentration, which is not depicted on this matrix. Most military credit will apply to the free electives area.	<b>120</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>BSAST – Bachelor of Science in Applied Science &amp; Technology</b>	Four year degree awarded by colleges and universities. Balanced between liberal arts, science and technology. Normally requires more science and math than a BA or BS. Most military credits apply to the free elective area.	<b>120</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>BA – Bachelor of Arts</b>	Four year degree awarded by colleges and universities. Requires more liberal arts credits than other bachelor's degrees. Most military credits will apply to the free electives area.	<b>120</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>MA/MS Master's Degree</b>	Course of study usually one year in length (30 semester hours) after the bachelor's degree. Undergraduate credit is not applicable. Transferring credit can be difficult.	<b>30</b>			
<b>Doctoral Degree</b>	Program of study at least two years (60 semester hours in length) beyond the master's degree.	<b>60</b>			

\* Many plans will exceed the minimum hours stated here.

## Degree Planning, (continued)

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### Subject Areas

There are some common components to all degree plans. All degree plans refer to the following terms:

Arts and Sciences  
Liberal Arts  
General Education Requirements

In most cases these terms are referring to the same area of study. These are traditional college subjects required to satisfy the core requirements of the degree. All of the subject areas and disciplines listed below refer to the elusive terms above:

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#### Communication Arts \*\*

English Composition	Writing Skills	Speech
Interpersonal	Intercultural Communications	
Communications		

\*\* All college programs described in this section require at least one college course in English composition or one of the nationally recognized college credit examinations.

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#### Humanities

Art	Philosophy	Theater
Music	Foreign	Ethics
	Language	
Literature	Religion	

\* Considered a Communications course at the University of Phoenix, but it is still liberal arts, arts and science or general education.

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#### Social Sciences and History

Psychology	Anthropology	Geography
Sociology	Economics	History
Political		
Science		

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## Degree Planning, (continued)

### Subject Areas (continued)

#### Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Anatomy and Physiology	Biology	Genetics
Microbiology	Algebra	Physics
Chemistry	Calculus	

### Subject Areas

Another group of terms encountered in degree planning is:

Applied and Professional Subjects  
Free Electives

Courses applicable to this area will be the majority of the credits recommended for military learning experiences as well as management and business courses. Here are some examples

#### Applied and Professional Subjects/Free Electives

Military Science	Health	Social Work
Criminal Justice	Leadership	Education
First Aid	Computer Science	Management
Business	Accounting	Instructor

These are general guidelines and may not be applicable to all degree plans.

### Selecting the Best Degree Plan

Frequently, members desire to obtain the degree best fitting their CG rate or to complete it in the shortest amount of time possible – or the fastest approach. What advice can you as the ESO provide to the member? A series of Degree Roadmaps have been developed to help in making the decision.

(<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/ve/roadmaps/roadmaps.asp>) The table is intended as a guide only. It is impossible to determine the most appropriate degree plan without having full knowledge of the individual's educational background and some idea of the goal that the member's is trying to obtain.

These are general guidelines and other criterion may be applicable. The main concern is to motivate the member toward an educational goal.

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## Degree Planning, (continued)

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### Selecting the Best Degree Plan (continued)

General operating procedures in the VE department are:

- Provide an AA/AS degree plan for all personnel who do not have a degree.
- Provide a BS for those members who have 45 semester hours of college credit (traditional college, exams, military training or any combination thereof.)
- Provide a liberal studies as well as a rate related degree plan. Geographic location is also considered when selecting the degree plans.
- Those members, who already have a bachelor's degree, may request a second bachelor's degree plan if desired. These students shall be advised that the second bachelor's typically must contain 30 semester hours of coursework not included in the first degree.
- Master's degree plans as well as doctoral degree plans are also available. Undergraduate credit is not applicable to graduate degree programs. Those requesting graduate degree plans shall be informed that undergraduate transcripts are not required unless graduate level work is listed on the transcript.
- Due to limited resources, the number of degree plans provided is limited so members should ensure they request the desired plan.

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### Residency

Most institutions require a certain number of semester hours of coursework to be completed through their institution. Since these institutions are members of SOCCOAST, they cannot require more than 25 percent of the degree to be completed through their institution. (See the chapter on SOCCOAST for additional information.) The majority of the institutions also offer distance learning courses. Courses taken through distance learning will usually count toward the residency requirement.

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## Degree Planning, (continued)

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### **Residency (continued)**

There are four academic institutions that have no or limited residency requirements. All the coursework may be taken at other institutions or acquired through various methods of non-traditional learning. The key to degree completion is to complete all the institution's requirements. The institutions are:

1. Charter Oak State College
2. Excelsior College
3. Thomas Edison State College
4. University of Phoenix (AA program only)

These institutions offer two different enrollment options. Members may enroll in the Military Degree Completion Program and take courses needed to complete the degree through the institution, or, they may enroll in the traditional program, which allows all credit to be completed outside the institution. The latter program has an annual maintenance fee of which students should be aware. If the degree is not completed within a specific time frame (one or two years depending on the program and the institution), the student pays an annual fee to continue in the program.

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### **State Tuition Policies**

When taking college classes at local colleges and universities, members may encounter problems in getting the in-state rate for tuition. States that currently have a policy NOT to provide in-state rates for military personnel and their dependents are: Michigan, South Dakota, Vermont, and Virginia. Some states allow the institution to make the decision to grant in-state rates. These states are: Alabama and Connecticut. This list is current as of Oct 2004. The state policies are published on the DANTES homepage at

[http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes\\_web/library/docs/distribution/2418.pdf](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/library/docs/distribution/2418.pdf)

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## Degree Planning, (continued)

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### Enrollment

The degree plan issued by the CGI outlines the degree requirements and shows how the member's educational experiences apply to that degree. The primary reason that the CGI issues degree plans is to minimize the member's expense by showing how non-traditional credits already earned can be applied to the credits required so the member can make a more informed decision.

**All enrollments in degree programs associated with the automated degree-planning program shall be processed through the CGI. As part of our agreements with the institutions, counselors at the CGI are to review the credits and prepare the SOCCOAST Student Agreement Form. The Student Agreement is then forwarded to the institution for review and approval.**

Links to the institutions are available on the CGI website at [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/links/links\\_distance\\_ed.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/links/links_distance_ed.asp). Enrollment forms will be available on the institution's homepage.

Level I partnership institutions have agreed to price reductions for USCG personnel. These institutions are Charter Oak State College, Excelsior College, Thomas Edison State College, and University of Phoenix. A list of current fees is available on the CGI homepage.

The completed enrollment form is forwarded to CGI. If checks are included in the package, members shall be instructed to staple the check to the application.

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End of Chapter